

and to protect the integrity of VA education programs. These are the agencies that determine which schools, courses, and training programs qualify as eligible for veterans seeking to use their GI Bill benefits.

SAA's also provide a vital role in occupational licensing and credentialing for veterans and in employer outreach.

On May 21 of this year, Mr. Speaker, the House passed H.R. 4085, as amended, a bill that included an increase from \$14 million available to State approving agencies in fiscal year 2002 to \$18 million for fiscal years 2003, 2004, and 2005. The Senate passed a similar measure as part of S. 2237 on September 26, but the bodies have not yet reached final agreement to a compromise on the larger bill containing this provision.

Without this legislation, Mr. Speaker, the SAA funding would decrease from the current funding level of \$14 million to the \$13 million levels on October 1 of this year. This is a stopgap measure for fiscal year 2003 only. My proposal simply puts SAA annual funding back at last year's level of \$14 million for fiscal year 2003 in order to provide the SAA's with the resources necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I join the ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), in urging every Member of the House to support this stopgap bill while we work on the other legislation.

I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), for his cooperation on this legislation. We have throughout this session worked together on so many bills, and this is another one, while we work out some details with the Senate, hopefully to significantly boost the amount of money for the State-approving agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3731. I again want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Chairman Smith) and the leaders of our subcommittee, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), for their effective leadership on this important issue.

As an original cosponsor, I urge all Members to support this bill. The purpose of this legislation is straightforward. It provides that the funding authorized for the State approving agencies for fiscal year 2003 is not less than the amount provided in fiscal year 2002.

Mr. Speaker, the State approving agencies play a vitally important role in the administering of educational benefits under the GI Bill. These are benefits our veterans and service members have earned. We must respect that. If Congress fails to move this legislation, SAA funding will be reduced. This would be harmful to veterans' educations.

Congress has recently added responsibilities and duties to the State ap-

proving agencies at a time when State budgets are being drastically cut. Congress must make sure that these agencies have adequate resources to do their job.

Mr. Speaker, I support the passage of this legislation, and I urge Members to do the same.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3731, a bill of which I am an original cosponsor, to maintain funding levels for State Approving Agencies who approve the Department of Veterans Affairs' educational programs as well as conduct outreach concerning education benefits. The passage of this bill will prevent a \$1 million decrease in funding for this program in Fiscal Year 2003. This decrease would likely result in the loss of State jobs and the degradation of this important program. We have a responsibility to our veterans to provide the services promised to them when they committed to serve our country.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have dedicated my service in Congress to improving the quality of life of our Nation's veterans. I remain committed to the responsibilities I have to our veterans.

I would like to thank the distinguished Chairman of our Committee, Mr. SMITH, as well as the distinguished Ranking Member and friend, Mr. LANE EVANS, for their hard work in bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3731, to increase funding for State Approving Agencies (SSA's). I am a cosponsor of this important legislation and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

SAA's promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for all veterans and for other eligible persons. They protect the GI Bill resources available for those programs, programs proving beneficial to veterans in a wide variety of ways. They assure greater educational opportunities and more opportunities to meet the changing needs of our veterans.

The need to increase funding for SAA's primarily reflects the new SAA duties in occupational licensing and credentialing and veteran, servicemember and employer outreach in each State. In recent years, Congress has increased SAA responsibilities, most recently through enactment of P.L. 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001. This landmark legislation increased the basic GI Bill benefit by 19 percent in January 2002 and will further increase the benefit by 30 percent in October 2003 and 39 percent in October 2004.

However, SAA funding was capped at \$13 million without an annual increase from FY95 to FY2000. Congress did increase SAA funding to \$14 million, but only for FY01 and 02. If Congress does not act to increase funding for FY03, the SAA budget reverts back to the \$13 million level, which, when combined with the growth in workload for SAA's under new laws, leaves the SAA's lacking the necessary resources to fulfill their responsibilities. H.R. 3731 in-

creases SAA annual funding from \$14 million to \$18 million, with a three percent increase the following two years. Furthermore, under H.R. 3731, New Mexico's funding levels for SAA's is estimated to rise to a level of \$147,612, an increase of \$5,677.

If action is not taken on this bill, funding for this program will decrease by one million dollars nationwide, which will result in a loss of jobs nationwide. If we do not act, veterans will lose important services. Therefore I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 3731. You will be supporting veterans' educational rights; service members who will be returning to civilian life ready to contribute to this great nation.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3731, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase amounts available to State approving agencies to ascertain the qualifications of educational institutions for furnishing courses of education to veterans and eligible persons under the Montgomery GI Bill and under other programs of education administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECOGNIZING EXPLOITS OF OFFICERS AND CREW OF THE S.S. HENRY BACON SUNK ON FEBRUARY 23, 1945

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 411) recognizing the exploits of the officers and crew of the S.S. Henry Bacon, a United States Liberty Ship that was sunk on February 23, 1945, in the waning days of World War II, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 411

Whereas during World War II the United States Liberty ship S.S. HENRY BACON was assigned the task of conveying war materials and supplies to the beleaguered Russian nation via the dangerous Arctic Ocean passage (referred to as the Murmansk Run) from Iceland or Scotland to Murmansk in northern Russia, and faithfully fulfilled her mission;

Whereas in early 1945 the British navy, having rescued a number of Norwegian civilians from occupied Norway and transported them to Murmansk, distributed them among the HENRY BACON and certain other merchant ships for transportation to England,

with 19 of such refugees being assigned to the HENRY BACON;

Whereas a convoy carrying those refugees, designated as Convoy RA 64 and consisting of 35 ships and naval escorts, departed Murmansk on February 17, 1945, amid one of the worst storms ever registered in the Arctic Ocean;

Whereas the HENRY BACON, with a full crew and refugees on board, sailing as part of that convoy, suffered damage from the force of the storms and from internal mechanical problems;

Whereas the HENRY BACON, while suffering from a loss of steering capacity, lost her place in the convoy and became a stray, unable to communicate with the convoy and required to maintain radio silence;

Whereas the HENRY BACON was left to her own devices and was in such dire straits that engine room workers used a sledgehammer and wedge to physically turn the ship;

Whereas on February 23, 1945, the HENRY BACON, alone in the freezing sea some 50 miles from the convoy, came under attack by 23 Junker JU-88 torpedo bombers of the German Luftwaffe;

Whereas armed with only the small but formidable anti-aircraft battery with which such merchantmen were equipped, the United States Navy Armed Guard on board the ship and the ship's merchant sailors fought gallantly against the oncoming torpedo bombers;

Whereas although mortally wounded after a German pilot succeeded in scoring a hit with a torpedo to the ship, the HENRY BACON fought back, shooting down a confirmed three enemy planes and crippling at least two more;

Whereas when the HENRY BACON began to sink, her captain ensured that all 19 Norwegian refugees on board received a place in one of the undamaged lifeboats;

Whereas when the lifeboat supply was exhausted, crewmen made rough rafts from the railroad ties that had been used to secure locomotives delivered to Russia;

Whereas the HENRY BACON went down with 28 members of her crew, including Captain Alfred Carini, Chief Engineer Donald Haviland, Bosun Holcomb Lammon Jr., and the commanding officer of the United States Navy Armed Guard unit aboard, Lieutenant (junior grade) John Sippola, but in its sinking kept the German planes from looking further and locating the main body of the convoy;

Whereas the 19 Norwegian refugees, as well as the other survivors, were rescued by British destroyers and those refugees were ultimately returned to Norway; and

Whereas the actions of the officers and crew of the HENRY BACON were in the finest tradition of the United States Merchant Marine and the United States Navy and have been recognized by the people of Norway and Russia but, until now, have not been acknowledged by their own Nation: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That the Congress recognizes the valiant deeds of the officers and crew of the S.S. HENRY BACON, a World War II United States Liberty ship that was sunk by German aircraft on February 23, 1945.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHUGH) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHUGH).

Mr. McHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the author of this legislation and a gentleman who worked very hard to ensure that we have this moment on the floor for this very, very worthy proposal.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHUGH), the chairman, for yielding time to me, and also for his work to move this legislation through the Committee on Armed Services.

Likewise, I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking member of the full committee, for his assistance, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exploits of the officers and crew of the S.S. *Henry Bacon*, a United States Liberty Ship that was sunk on February 23, 1945, in the waning days of World War II.

During World War II, the S.S. *Henry Bacon* was assigned the task of conveying war materials and supplies to the beleaguered Russian nation via the dangerous Arctic ocean passage known as the Murmansk run.

In early 1945, the British Navy, having rescued a number of Norwegian civilians from Norway and transported them to Murmansk, distributed them among the *Henry Bacon* and certain other merchant ships for transportation to England, with 19 of such refugees being assigned to the *Henry Bacon*.

On February 17, 1945, a convoy carrying these refugees and consisting of 35 ships and naval escorts departed Murmansk amid one of the worst storms ever registered in the Arctic ocean. The *Henry Bacon*, with a full crew and refugees on board, sailing as part of that convoy, suffered damage from the force of the storms and from internal mechanical problems. Suffering from a loss of steering capacity, the *Henry Bacon* lost her place in the convoy and became a stray, unable to communicate with the convoy, and required to maintain radio silence.

□ 1815

The *Henry Bacon* was in such dire straits that engine room workers used a sledge hammer and wedge to physically turn the ship.

On February 23, the *Henry Bacon* alone in the freezing sea some 50 miles from the convoy came under attack by 23 Junker JU-88 torpedo bombers of the German Luftwaffe. The United States Navy Armed Guard on board and the ship's merchant sailors fought gallantly against the oncoming torpedo bombers.

Although sinking, after a German pilot succeeded in scoring a hit with a torpedo to the ship, the crew of the *Henry Bacon* fought back, shooting down a confirmed three enemy planes and crippling at least two more. As the *Henry Bacon* began to sink, her captain ensured that all 19 Norwegian refugees on board received a place in one of the undamaged life boats. When the life boat supply was exhausted, crewmen made rough rafts from the railroad ties

that had been used to secure locomotives delivered to Russia.

The *Henry Bacon* went down with 28 members of her crew including Captain Alfred Carini, Chief Engineer Donald Haviland, Bosun Holcomb Lammon, Jr., and the commanding officer of the United States Navy Armed Guard Unit aboard, Lieutenant John Sippola, but in its sinking kept the German planes from looking further and locating the main body of the convoy.

British destroyers rescued the 19 Norwegian refugees as well as the other survivors. Those refugees were ultimately returned to Norway. I am pleased one of my constituents, Dr. Robert Alotta, authored a book, "The Last Voyage of the S.S. *Henry Bacon*," along with Donald Foxvog, documenting this heroic event. The actions of the officers and crew of the *Henry Bacon* were in the finest tradition of the United States Merchant Marine and the United States Navy and have been recognized by the people of Norway and Russia, but until now have not been acknowledged by their own Nation.

The fabric of American history is interwoven with countless threads of valor on the field of battle, without which we would likely not enjoy the freedoms we have today. In recognizing these deeds, we preserve the memory of those who came before us for generations of Americans to come.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a small way to convey the thanks of a grateful Nation.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 411, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE). House Concurrent Resolution 411 recognizes the exploits of the officers and crew of the S.S. *Henry Bacon*, a United States liberty ship that was sunk on February 23, 1945, in the waning days of the Second World War.

The S.S. *Henry Bacon* was one of over 2,700 liberty ships mass produced in our country. Assembled from large prefabricated sections, this pioneering method of production allowed the *Henry Bacon* to be built in 6 weeks and commissioned on November 11, 1942. During the war, liberty ships were called ugly ducklings. However, these ships were the work horses of the Second World War, the largest class of civilian made war ships ever built. The crews consisted of over 44 Merchant Marines and 12 to 25 Naval Armed Guards.

Convoys of liberty ships filled the horizon as they carried cargos of grain and mail, ore and ammunition, trucks and troops across the Atlantic. A liberty ship can hold over 9,000 tons of cargo, in addition to trains, planes and tanks that were lashed to the decks.

The *Henry Bacon* was part of a convoy of 35 ships and Naval escorts that departed Murmansk, Russia, on February 17, 1945, on a rescue operation to

save 502 Norwegian children and adults who were left behind to starve when Nazi troops began to fall back.

Nineteen Norwegian refugees were aboard the *Henry Bacon* when a severe 2-day gale separated the ship from the convoy.

Damaged from this storm and 60 miles away from the support and protection of the convoy, the *Henry Bacon* was attacked by German torpedo planes. The ship's crew valiantly fought the attacking planes, downing several and exploding a number of torpedoes, but a torpedo slipped through and struck the ship on the starboard side. As the ship began to sink, only two undamaged lifeboats were safely launched. The crew ensured that all the Norwegians were on board the lifeboats. Some crew even gave up their places to the Norwegians. According to one crew member, "The men just waited until all 19 refugees found seats. None had to be asked or ordered to give up his seat in the lifeboat."

British destroyers rescued the survivors several hours later. Sadly, Captain Alfred Carini and Chief Engineer Donald Haviland and 27 crew members went down with the ship.

House Concurrent Resolution 411 recognizes the heroic and valiant deeds of the officers and crew of the S.S. *Henry Bacon*. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the deeds and sacrifices of that crew.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me say a few words, if I might. First of all, my thanks, as I mentioned earlier, to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE). The saga of liberty ships in World War II is particularly a remarkable one. Indeed, I was at a function this past weekend in my district in Oswego, New York, where they were commemorating an opening of a safe haven museum, a museum that commemorated a place, a shelter in that community, the only place provided in World War II for Jewish refugees, something that that community understandably is very, very proud of.

We had a number of refugees from that period speak during the ceremony, and they mentioned their experience on a liberty ship, a ship called the *Henry Gibbons*, a ship that brought them and nearly a thousand souls from Italy. So on that basis alone, this is a very, very worthy resolution.

As my two colleagues who have spoken previously so eloquently underscored, the exploits and heroism of those displayed on the *Henry Bacon* were particularly extraordinary, that stood them apart from the accomplishments of other extraordinary American and women and liberty ships. As is the case with most stories with heroism, the crew members of the *Henry Bacon* were from all walks of life, were ordinary men who met extraordinary challenges with incredible courage. And it is I think, Mr. Speaker, particularly important to remember the heroes of past conflicts because in their stories

we find examples of courage and sacrifice that perhaps few times in our Nation's history are more needed than they are now to sustain us as we go forward in the war against terrorism around the globe.

Perhaps one of the more eloquent and simple statements about the brave men aboard the *Henry Bacon* was spoken by a historian of that era whose writing shortly after that event wrote, "There is no finer instance of a merchant ship defense in the history of the North Russian convoys."

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE). Most of all, my thanks to the brave men of the *Henry Bacon* and all that they did at that time. Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to support this very, very worthy enactment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 411, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent Resolution recognizing the exploits of the officers and crew of the S.S. *Henry Bacon*, a United States Liberty ship that was sunk on February 23, 1945."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 411.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### RECOGNIZING COMMODORE JOHN BARRY AS THE FIRST FLAG OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 6) recognizing Commodore John Barry as the first flag officer of the United States Navy, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 6

Whereas John Barry, American merchant marine captain and native of County Wexford, Ireland, volunteered his services to the Continental Navy during the American War for Independence and was assigned by the Continental Congress as captain of the *Lexington*, taking command of that vessel on March 14, 1776, and later participating in the victorious Trenton campaign;

Whereas the quality and effectiveness of Captain John Barry's service to the American war effort was recognized not only by George Washington but also by the enemies of the new Nation;

Whereas Captain John Barry rejected British General Lord Howe's flattering offer to desert Washington and the patriot cause, stating: "Not the value and command of the whole British fleet can lure me from the cause of my country.";

Whereas Captain John Barry, while in command of the frigate *Alliance*, successfully transported French gold to America to help finance the American War for Independence and also won numerous victories at sea;

Whereas when the First Congress, acting under the new Constitution of the United States, authorized the raising and construction of the United States Navy, it was to Captain John Barry that President George Washington turned to build and lead the new Nation's infant Navy, the successor to the Continental Navy of the War for Independence;

Whereas Captain John Barry supervised the building of his flagship, the U.S.S. *United States*;

Whereas on February 22, 1797, President Washington personally conferred upon Captain John Barry, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, the rank of Captain, with "Commission No. 1", United States Navy, dated June 7, 1794;

Whereas John Barry served as the senior officer of the United States Navy, with the title of "Commodore" (in official correspondence), under Presidents Washington, John Adams, and Jefferson;

Whereas as commander of the first United States naval squadron under the Constitution of the United States, which included the U.S.S. *Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"), John Barry was a Commodore, with the right to fly a broad pendant, which made him a flag officer; and

Whereas in this sense it can be said that Commodore John Barry was the first flag officer of the United States Navy: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That Commodore John Barry is recognized, and is hereby honored, as the first flag officer of the United States Navy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 6.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. SPEAKER. I rise in support of H.J. Res. 6, a resolution recognizing Commodore John Barry as the first flag officer of the United States Navy. Born in 1745, John Barry came to America as a young seaman and was a great American patriot and warrior during the Revolutionary War.

After the war, he was appointed the head of the United States Navy by